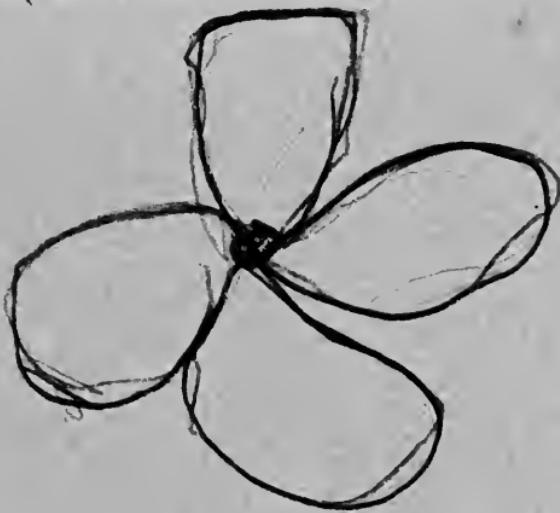


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THE  
**LABOR PROBLEM**  
IN THE  
**UNITED STATES.**



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# THE LABOR PROBLEM IN THE UNITED STATES.

AN INDEPENDENT CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS ITS SOLUTION.

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By an ANGLO-AMERICAN.

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WITH AN INTRODUCTORY LETTER BY THE  
HONORABLE THURLOW WEED.

NEW YORK:  
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## INTRODUCTORY LETTER

From the Honorable THURLOW WEED.

"The question which occupies your time and thoughts, and which you have treated so ably and fully is one of vital importance—one which has caused, and is causing me anxiety and apprehension. Unhappily, its importance seems not to have attracted, after the immediate danger was over, the attention of the governing classes, too many of whom, I fear, fail to discover that there are two sides to the question. You have, I am happy to see, discerned and discussed it from both points of view. In the views expressed in the Appeal, I heartily concur. Both sides of the issue are fairly, forcibly, and fearlessly considered.

The working classes, or rather the unemployed, have been very patient and forbearing; but they cannot forbear or endure much longer. Nothing but returning prosperity can avert evils.

My sympathies are thoroughly with the toiling millions. Governments, State and National, can do much to relieve the industries of the country, if they possess the wisdom and honesty to legislate paternally. Your Appeal cannot fail to exert a salutary influence; for it is equally just to Capital and Labor; and as such it should be well circulated and read among all classes of the community."

THURLOW WEED.

## PREFACE.

The following treatise was written immediately after the terrible crisis in July, and assumed the form of a letter to a most eminent public man. It has been thrown into its present shape as the one best suited for general circulation; and as now issued it is intended to provoke inquiry, and to stimulate effort.

Every day the evidence accumulates that the Labor Question is becoming the grand problem of the country and of the age. Whether or not we will admit the fact, we are standing face to face with a giant evil, with a prodigious difficulty. It must be met boldly yet prudently. The author has received numerous testimonials to the necessity of this appeal. Among others the following opinion from the late lamented Senator Morton is entitled to respect. In a letter to the author this able and patriotic man thus expressed himself:—"The labor question is silenced, but not settled. We shall have trouble upon it yet. The day is not distant when we shall be compelled to grapple with the real principles and claims which underlie this agitation. The future of our country is largely involved in the solution of this matter. For that reason it should be kept before the public mind; and I cannot but regard your letter as most timely and useful."

The introductory letter of the Honorable Thurlow Weed, is written in the same tone and spirit. Other similar opinions may be added; and apart from all question of literary merit in the present treatise the author entreats a discussion of the subject, on the ground of its public importance and of the living issues involved. For himself he has no wish to appear otherwise than as an anonymous contributor. His appeal, therefore, must be examined independently of personal considerations. He has not written without ample opportunity of testing the opinions of public men, and of workingmen, too; and he has reason to know that thousands are anxious for the solution of this difficulty, and that thousands are willing to co-operate in the adoption of any suitable plans to that end. The author proposes to examine other phases of this great social problem; and for any information which may facilitate the exposition of the questions raised, or for any opinions, honestly expressed, which may guide him in his inquiries, he will tender hearty thanks. All such communications, whether written or printed, will promptly reach the author, if addressed to him through the publishers. And now, whatever may be the merits or demerits of this production, it is sent forth on its mission with an earnest hope and prayer that it may, at least, arouse in others some anxious inquiry, or some generous impulse.

THE AUTHOR.

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# THE LABOR PROBLEM.

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It is the object of the present paper to consider calmly some of the great questions which arise out of the labor difficulties in the United States. The relative positions of employers and employed, and, still more, the prerogative and duty of the Government in reference to each, may yet be more clearly defined.

## THE RECENT CRISIS.

Without doubt the country is passing through a singularly grave crisis. Not even the Great Rebellion threatened more disastrous results to the social fabric. Within a very short period scenes have been enacted at which humanity shudders. It is seldom that, in any civilized community, much less under the jurisdiction of the United States, such utter lawlessness prevails. The story forms a sad sequel to our Centennial jubilation ; yet, like the beacon's flickering glare, it warns of danger in the distance. A blush may tinge the cheeks of future historians as they describe how civil and military authority was resisted, how life and property were sacrificed, and how a "reign of terror" was virtually established, by misguided, unthinking, infuriated men—and all *for what?* yet from the smouldering ashes of the strife may be deduced the lessons which will ensure our future peace.

## IS THE CRISIS ENDED?

Is it impertinent to enquire whether the difficulty is settled?—whether the misunderstandings between employers and employed are adjusted?—whether labor will hereafter receive its due reward, and capital be appreciated at its proper worth?—and whether the country will enjoy, without the danger of such volcanic eruptions, the benefits of generous enterprise, and well directed toil?

The common assumption is that the “strike” has ended. In bold and flaming type the newspapers have announced the “collapse” of the insurrection—the “restoration” of order—the “resumption” of trade; and following close upon such announcements have been appeals for vengeance, and promises of reform. But does not the language used betray a secret uneasiness? Is there not a suppressed fear that a worm is gawing at the root of our social system?—that a canker is poisoning the streams of our national life? There is a lull in the storm—a suspension of hostilities—a subsidence of the primal causes of the recent violent, foolish, wicked outbreak. But is it not palpable that neither party has frankly and unequivocally given way?—that the operative classes have not renounced their demands?—that the railway companies have not yielded to dictation?—that thousands of the unemployed are still clamoring for bread? At best there is a hollow truce.

## ELEMENTS OF DANGER.

The complicated questions which underlie the whole remain untouched. All the brutal passions which have lately broken loose are only placed in temporary check.

In millions of hearts and homes new thoughts are springing up,—new claims are ready to be enforced. As well attempt, in Canute fashion, to bid the rolling tide be still, as try to stop the onward flow of human life, or set at naught the rights which are supposed to be inseparable from a oneness of origin, or a unity of relation. There are in our very midst elements of future strife. The embers of a blind, insensate passion are smouldering on every side. A policy of repression, whether by authority or by bribe, cannot permanently avail to allay the evil spirit. There is ample evidence to show that in their restless struggles for independence and power the working classes are assuming giant proportions, and acquiring a Samson-like strength. As with that redoubtable hero of Scripture history, an effort may be made to bind down the rising giant with fetters of brass or gold. The danger is lest these chains should suddenly give way, and lest in the terrible rebound the popular fury, like an uncaged monster, should shake the pillars of State, and overwhelm the nation in calamity and woe. It is against this danger that we have to guard. The danger is not imaginary. Whether or not we open our eyes to the fact, we are walking upon a very combustible mine,—standing at the brink of an overcharged furnace.

The evil is at present within our grasp; the danger is subject to our control. Will it not be wise to arrest its progress in due time? It is possible to do this; but it must be done by other methods than those hitherto applied. The process of indiscriminate slaughter, as recommended by some writers, will wholly fail. Equally so the common expedient of flattery and bribery can result in no permanent good. By such means the fundamen-

tal question is ignored. It seems hardly to be conceded that working men have rights ; it is openly denied that they have any ground of complaint. Here the issue is joined ; and here is seen one of the lamentable consequences of the recent trouble. In the disorder which ensued the "strike" degenerated into riot. The former was legitimate, however foolish ; and so long as the strikers confined themselves within the bounds of law, they had a right to claim the protection of law. But when orderly resistance changed into open rebellion, and when a peaceful protest was followed by a violent crusade against property and life, then the safety of society was endangered, and it was necessary for the civil ruler and the military power to interfere.

This distinction must be kept in view, especially since one of the railway companies seriously implicated has officially declared that not more than ten per cent. of their men took part in the strike, and that even those were intimidated to do so by men who had no connection with the railway service. Whether or not it is wise on abstract principles to strike at any time is a question which does not yet turn up for discussion. The fact with which we are confronted is that a "strike" on a gigantic scale has taken place. That strike was obviously the result of a preconcerted plan, as it proved to be the precursor of a series of outrages which have tarnished our reputation, and cast a stigma upon civilization itself. The question of primary moment, therefore, is whether any justification can be found for the late disturbance? That question must be viewed in two aspects,—as it relates both to employers and employed.

## ALLEGED CAUSES OF THE STRIKE.

By the former it is urged that a reduction of wages was necessary. A general shrinkage had taken place in the value of public property. In that depreciation railway property suffered a corresponding decline. The amount of traffic was reduced ; the charge for freightage was lessened ; the working and incidental expenses were increased ; the payment of interest on bonds had to be met ; and, altogether, that undesirable state of financial embarrassment was reached when the ordinary income did not meet the inevitable expenditure. The result was that no dividend, or but a very small and uncertain dividend, could be paid to stockholders, and that, in reality, many of the railway companies were bordering upon insolvency. It is generally admitted that the latter statements are true. Thousands of persons have had proof of this in the loss of their property, and in consequent privation and hardship ; whilst the very low figures at which railway stocks are still quoted, in both the American and British markets, afford evidence of public distrust.

But admitting the necessity of a reduction of expenses, the question is next raised whether that reduction should be made solely, or principally, through the wages of the workmen ? The rate of wages, it is pleaded, had already been brought down to a very low point. At the prevailing price of provisions, of wearing apparel, of house rent, and of the general necessaries of life, it is difficult for the most frugal to secure ordinary comforts for themselves and their families, and yet preserve harmony between their income and expenditure. In some cases, too, even this small remuneration had

been paid with great irregularity; so that from one to two, and even three months, have passed without a "settling." A reduction in these wages, therefore, of from ten to twenty per cent., without a corresponding reduction in the time and amount of labor required—yea, in some cases, with a positive increase of these—involved a further curtailment of the power to live honestly and comfortably, and had very much the appearance of injustice and oppression.

In view of these facts it is not surprising that the question should have been raised by the railway employees and their friends whether the whole difficulty could not be met by a general reduction of expenses? by the abolition of needless and useless offices? by lessening the superfluous salaries which are paid to directors, superintendents, chairmen, and other officials, who contribute nothing to the practical working of the companies, and some of whom are not even ornamental figure-heads? and, in short, by a reorganization of the whole system, through which economy and efficiency could be secured? And should these things fail, then would it not be well to ask the public, for whose convenience the railway system is established, to contribute a fair share of the increased income required by acquiescing in a small—almost imperceptible addition to passengers' fares, and to the rates of freightage? The loss, if any, it is said, would thus be equally divided; and by distributing the burden to be carried over so wide a surface no particular back would be broken, and no individual interest would suffer.

## EMBARRASSEMENTS OF RAILWAY COMPANIES.

In this view of the matter there is, at least, an air of plausibility. It may, indeed, be difficult to say why this proposition should not be accepted as reasonable and just. On both sides it is admitted that the value of railway property has declined, that receipts have been less, and expenses greater than for some years previously. In this admission so much is gained; it is really the first step towards an amicable adjustment of the difficulty. But following upon this, is it not necessary to make a full, impartial inquiry into the causes which have led to this depreciation of stock, and this loss of income?

The phenomenon is not satisfactorily explained by the sole consideration of bad trade. Has there not been, in too many instances a system of unprincipled and suicidal competition, through which legitimate charges have been reduced, and extravagant expenses incurred, and by the operation of which both income and efficiency have been impaired? As in part the result of this insane policy, have not many of the lines been allowed to fall into bad repair? Has not much of the rolling stock been so neglected and injured that it is now practically unfit for use? Have not extravagant sums been lavished on the construction and embellishment of buildings, offices, carriages, and other things, which neither the business of the companies, nor the convenience of the public, has required, and which whilst adding to luxury have diminished comfort? And, finally, is it not true that in the development of this policy, in the application of these tactics, new offices have been created, new agents employed, new regulations en-

forced, and new dangers incurred, which have added nothing to order and regularity in the working of the lines, which have engendered public distrust and impoverishing rivalry, and all of which might have been dispensed with without loss of prestige and power.

### IMPOLICY OF RAILWAY ADMINISTRATION.

These, if true, are grave and startling charges; and can they be denied? In face of the overwhelming evidence to the contrary, no responsible railway authorities in the land will dare to call them in question. They suggest a false and corrupt system, the full development of which can only lead to mischief, if not to ruin. At the basis of such system there is a gross disregard of the first principles of commercial integrity and honor. An expense is needlessly created, which from natural resources there is not ability to pay. With reckless criminality the lives of the public are endangered to gratify the passions of scheming and antagonistic boards; and to compensate in part for the losses occasioned by mismanagement, by extravagance, by accident, by fraud, the efficiency of the lines must be impaired, and honest and industrious employees must be reduced in their wages—ground down to penury and starvation.

It is in the latter consideration that the iniquity of the proceeding is mostly manifest. Is it fair that the innocent should thus suffer for the guilty? In the reduced remuneration it has been proposed to offer, is there an honest compensation for the work exacted from them, whether considered in the time consumed, or in the ability exerted? and is it really an adequate provision for the common expenses and necessities of life—for

food and clothing, for rent and recreation? The laboring classes must have these things. It is not luxury that is thought of. They have been born—inured to toil; and by the sweat of their brow, and the straining of their nerves, they are willing—anxious to earn their bread. But they want bread enough to satisfy their hunger; they want homes in which they can have privacy, and comfort, and health; and they want, sometimes, to be enabled to breathe the exhilarating air of heaven, to drink in the beauties of nature, and to feast their minds upon the wonders of literature and art.

With the wages proposed for them this is next to impossible. The prices charged for ordinary things necessarily restrict their purchases within a narrow circle. Many of the comforts they may desire are wholly beyond their means. It is doubtful whether they can always obtain enough of what is absolutely necessary, when there is a large family to support, and when sickness invades the dwelling. If the wages are paid regularly as they fall due, there can be little to spare for superfluities, or to put by against "a rainy day," when the landlord has been paid his rent, and when other necessary expenses are met. In a more marked degree therefore, there must be restriction and privation when their honest earnings are withheld for two or three months, and when, in consequence of this, they have to contract debts at the stores, upon which they virtually pay an exorbitant interest, besides being compelled to take an inferior quality of goods. Such an infamous practice may not be common with every railway company, but it does apply to some; and if it is not known it should be, that during the recent trouble some railway operatives received notice of a reduction of their wages,

whilst at that very time their employers were considerably in arrears in the payment of wages, and hundreds of men were bearing the inconvenience and hardship with heroic courage—in uncomplaining silence—with a praiseworthy resignation.

Is such treatment honorable and just? Does it recognize the first element of our social brotherhood? Is it based upon the golden rule, which reason suggests, and Christianity confirms, that we should do unto others as we would they should do unto us? Where is the railway director who does not insist upon full and prompt payment for his services? Who among all the officials would be content with a bare subsistence as a reward for his toil? and who, still more, is willing to forego any portion of his emolument, or any measure of his luxury, for the better regulation of the company, and the more certain payment of an equitable dividend to hapless shareholders? What, in this respect, is the difference between directors and mechanics? Are the latter supposed be to more willing than the former to make a sacrifice for the public good, or for the benefit of their employers? Does it enter into the nature of their engagement to do this? Can they really afford to relinquish a ten or twenty per cent. of their income without personal injury, or family discomfort? If not, is it equitable—yea, is it humane, to ask them to do it upon pain of instant dismissal? Shall they have no voice in the disposal of their services, or no concurrent action in regulating the terms on which those services are to be render and received? This surely is not the acme of our nineteenth century, civilization; this is not the practical development of our lauded doctrine of liberty and equality; this is not

the genuine spirit of that religion which claims Jesus for its author, and which breathes universal amity and love.

### DISTINCTIONS AND RELATIONS OF CLASSES.

There is undoubtedly an important distinction between the positions of employer and employed. It will be an egregious blunder—a fatal mistake, to confound them. But that distinction neither partakes of the feudal relation and service of the middle ages, nor implies the utter abrogation of individual freedom and independence so characteristic of slavery in its worst forms in the Southern States prior to the act of rebellion. There is rather implied or suggested a state of mutual relationship and dependence, based primarily, it may be, upon considerations of self-interest, but entailing on each a sacred obligation, and resulting from the exercise of personal volition. In trade operations neither class can proclaim itself independent of the other. As with the members of the human body, each is essential to the completeness of the whole. Whilst performing different functions they are each promoting a general result, and so inseparable, indeed, is the union which may and does exist between them that whatever incidents affect the one, whether prosperously or adversely, will indirectly, at least, leave their impress upon the other. In the employment of labor the capitalist invests money, and for that he has a right to expect a remunerative return. The laborer, on the other hand, whether mechanic or artisan, supplies the strength of his arms, the skill of his hands, the ingenuity of his brain; and for that he is to be rewarded according the the time expended, or the work performed, or any other clearly defined, and mutually accepted terms.

Between capital and labor, as thus understood, there is no antagonism. The one balances the other. Each has essential rights; and upon each there are imperative duties. Neither can be neglected without contravening the laws of God, and inflicting a wrong upon society. It is necessary that both should be employed. There is no gratuitous favor on either side. Personal interests are first promoted by the arrangement, and through these the general good of the community is subserved. Is the employer, therefore, to become haughty and exacting? or the employed to grow churlish and suspicious? Shall the one demand the maximum of labor for a minimum of remuneration? and, Pharaoh like, virtually require bricks without furnishing the materials wherewith to make them, or without returning a just compensation for them? Or shall the other clamor impetuously for less work and more pay; and mindful only of self-indulgence, disregard the authority and claims of their employers, and engage in their respective vocations with listlessness and grumbling? No; for in either case there would be a violation of the first elements of harmony and success. Authority is the prerogative of one; obedience the duty of the other. Yet the two are so related that neither is absolutely independent of the other; nor can either capital or labor, which forms the basis on which each rests, claim any unwonted degree of credit for the service it renders, as though its action in the premises were supererogatory. Where there is money there is also a corresponding obligation to employ that money in productive industry, or for some useful end. It is the "talent" bestowed by the Universal Proprietor, not for selfish gratification solely, but for social advantage generally. In like man-

ner physical strength and mental skill, unaccompanied by pecuniary resources form virtually so much personal property which their possessor is bound to employ for his own and for others' good, and by which the wealth of the capitalist may be rendered remunerative and useful. The one is the counterpoise of the other; the two combined keep the wheels of business in motion, and furnish with regularity the means whereby the wants of society may be supplied.

On this principle the employer has no more right to oppress his men than the employed have to plot against their masters. It is not, or should not be, a question as to how much work can be extracted from the men, and how little money be paid for it, on the one hand; or how small an amount of service can be performed for the highest amount of wages, on the other. The employer is guilty of injustice and fraud who under pretence of "hard times" and depreciated capital, attempts to grind down his men to the dust, and out of their blood, and bones, and brains, squeezes as by some hydraulic pressure the means of personal luxury and indulgence, without providing them sufficiently with the "one thing needful" for their own wants. Equally so it is unreasonable and dishonest for workmen in any position to use the time of their employers for any other than their legitimate work, or to perform that work in a slovenly and inefficient manner, or to require more for it in the shape of compensation than its real merits demand, or than the recognized laws of trade, or the uniform usages of society warrant. When this is done on either side it disturbs the equilibrium of power, and puts the whole machinery out of joint; and not

simply the parties primarily concerned, but the whole community is injuriously affected by the result.

### INEQUALITY AND INJUSTICE.

This, it is alleged by the railway employees, is what the companies have attempted to do. So far from denying, the authorities have rather admitted the "soft impeachment," and have pleaded extenuation from the necessity of the times. None of them have had the temerity to assert that the reduced wages would be sufficient, considered as a compensation for the work required, or as furnishing adequate means for the supply of personal and domestic wants. This unenviable task has been left to a few writers in the press who have taken a strongly *party* view of the question, and many of whose articles have evinced a lamentable confusion of idea, if not a deliberate purpose to ignore the rights and claims of the working men. No fair comparison can be made between the actual value of wages paid now and the wages paid twenty years ago, for the very simple reason that the conditions of living have so materially altered. Before the war house-rent was lower, and both food and clothing were cheaper than they are to-day. A salary of two dollars per day then would practically go farther than three dollars per day now.

It is doubtless true, according to the very hackneyed metaphor which has lately been so much quoted, that "half a loaf is better than no loaf" at all. Only an idiot would call in question that very self-evident truth. But in this case the application of the metaphor fails. The question is, why there should not be a whole, instead of half a loaf? With good, economical management would the need exist for this paring

down process? Or, if unhappily, it become necessary to go upon "short commons," why should not the rule apply to managers as well as to men? It seems hardly fair that they should share in all the profit, yet suffer none of the loss. Equality is desired, not, indeed, of position—for that can never be; but rather in principle and spirit, through which there may be a graduated scale of profit and loss, according to the capital invested, and the service supplied.

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### AN IMPROVED RAILWAY POLICY.

Acting on these principles, it is possible for railway companies to inaugurate a new era in the management of their business, in which economy and justice may be the prevailing elements, and through which the public interests will be better served, and the condition of their employees elevated and improved. It will be ruinous to persist in the old lines of policy. That policy is simply suicidal. The wants of the community require—the voice of the community demands a reorganization of the whole system. Not the enrichment of the few at the expense of the many, must be the object sought, but rather the abandonment of selfish intrigues and fraudulent designs, in promotion of the common good. Such a change may more readily be brought about by a full recognition of the fact that mechanics, engineers, conductors, pointsmen, and every other class of railway operatives, form integral parts of the system. They cannot be dispensed with. The whole organization will come to a standstill, or gradually fall to pieces, without their services. It is right, therefore, that those services should be estimated at their full value. They are not to be demanded without an equitable compensation.

Our railway operatives are not—to quote Longfellow's phraseology, "like dumb driven cattle." It is their habit to reason as well as to work. The service they render is all the more trustworthy and useful in that it is intelligent and voluntary; and perhaps one of the surest signs of the "good time coming," and one of the most effectual steps towards the abrogation of misunderstanding, and the perpetuation of order, will be for railway and other public companies, to act promptly, generously, sincerely, and justly in recognizing the claims of their men, and in fulfilling the duties of their own relations towards them.

### POSITION AND OBLIGATION OF WORKING-MEN.

This, however, is only one side of the question. There is a yet graver light in which to view it. It would be a disastrous thing to engender the idea, or to encourage the delusion, that workingmen are faultless. In too many instances there is a virtual assumption of infallibility on their behalf. So much has been said and written on the *vox populi vox Dei* theory, that many of the working classes seem foolishly to imagine that there is invested in them something analogous to the "divine right" of kings, and that in virtue thereof they have an absolute prerogative to control at once the course of politics and the state of trade.

This is a mistake. There is nothing in nature or society to warrant the assumption. With all the respect due to them, submission to law and order is required from them. Yea, more than this; however potent may be their influence because of their predominating numbers, they are bound to subordinate that influence

to the general harmony of society rather than to the gratification of the selfish schemes and passions of a particular class. Hence resistance to the properly constituted authority of the nation is at once criminal and foolish; and hence, too, the enforcement of demands in trade relations, whether pertaining to work or wages, incompatible with a ratified agreement, or with a recognized usage, or with a due regard to the responsibilities and claims of the employers, necessarily disturbs the proper course of business, and leads eventually to social disorganization and distress.

#### IMPOLICY OF THE LATE STRIKE.

The recent strikes have developed both these evils in a remarkable degree. It may, indeed, be allowed that many of the disturbances which are deplored were caused principally by persons who are unconnected with the railway service—that the “roughs” and baser elements of society took advantage of what was, in its first stages, a legitimate and orderly movement, to gratify their ferocious passions, and to wreak vengeance upon society for plunder and crime. Still, the question may be asked whether it was perfectly justifiable, and if justifiable on abstract grounds, whether it was wise in its practical issues to force the collision which ensued between employers and employed? Was there a fair consideration of the condition of trade in the country, of the enormous shrinkage which had taken place in the value of railway property, in common with other real estate, and of the difficulties with which railway companies had to contend in consequence of these things, and of their own injudicious arrangements in the past? Was there any thought of the possibility of

the companies refusing the demands of their men? of the right, or of the best course to pursue should such a contingency occur? or of what might be the consequences to themselves and to the country, if a general strike should ensue, and if through that there should be a suspension of labor, and an interruption of railway traffic? And estimating these things at their apparent value, was there as the result of them the expression of a desire to hold, or the adoption of any open, honest, organized plans for a friendly conference with the authorities, that mutual differences and claims might be frankly stated and fairly discussed, and that the actual or supposed difficulty might be adjusted upon honorable and satisfactory terms?

Had such a method been adopted, is it probable that anything like the dreadful scenes which disturbed the country would have taken place?—that anything approaching to a general stoppage of business would have occurred? Would not reason have asserted its supremacy over passion? Would not prejudice have been disarmed, and confidence restored, by friendly explanations and kindly appeals? and satisfied that the interests of employers and employed were substantially one, and that by their harmonious or antagonistic action the prosperity of the whole country would be advanced or retarded, would not the men have continued steady at their work, resolving to make the best of the emergency? and would they not thereby have prevented the sacrifice of both property and life, and the unspeakable anguish which has since rent thousands of human hearts?

The whole proceeding was apparently too impulsive and selfish. No other interests were considered than those which affected the classes immediately concerned.

Even those, indeed, were not duly appreciated, or greater deliberation and caution would have been practised. And with any just sense of the right of citizenship, or the obligations of brotherhood, with any deference to the claims of society, or any attempt to exemplify the golden rule of doing unto others as we would others should do unto us, the very thought would have been repelled as mean and dishonorable, of causing employers to break their engagements with the public, and of interrupting the whole business relations of the community. When thus fairly viewed the mind shrinks from the recent railway strike, and from that on the Grand Trunk Railway in Canada by which it had been preceded, as involving a breach of faith, and as leading to the gravest public inconvenience. In this respect it can be regarded only as an unmitigated evil.

#### EVIL OF STRIKES IN GENERAL.

Nor can a more modified view be taken of the practical character and effect of any other great strike in the staple industries of the country. The same relations subsist, and the same principles substantially apply in mining and manufacturing interests. In a proper view of the matter, those who are engaged in those various callings are only agents of the public. They engage to supply a certain article in demand upon stipulated terms; and any violation of the contract through which the required article fails in its production is a public disappointment and loss. To stop the railway traffic is in effect to cut off the principal means of communication and transport by which manufactured goods may be distributed through the country; whilst to close the factories or mines is to cut off the supply at

its very source, and thus to precipitate a state of general stagnation and distrust. In either case the motive is more selfish than patriotic. It is an appeal to brute passion rather than to enlightened reason. By injuring the whole it aims to benefit the few ; and in seeking to resist a may-be too partial, and, perhaps, not always well regulated system, it would establish in its place a blind and irresponsible despotism, which would in another form perpetuate and intensify the very evils of which its promoters complain. This is unjust to society, since, allowing there to be a wrong somewhere, the innocent is made to suffer for the guilty, without any power of voluntary action in the matter ; and since it is a direct contravention of one of the fundamental laws of morality laid down by the Great Teacher—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Nor is it less detrimental to the parties primarily concerned ; since the worst passions of their nature are aroused, and since they must of necessity be partakers in the privations and sorrows which inevitably follow.

Under any circumstances a strike is not the legitimate method of settling a dispute. It is as unjustifiable in trade as war is between nations. There is, and there can be, no law absolutely to prevent a strike, inasmuch as it simply resolves itself into resistance by one party to a contract to certain terms proposed by the other. The liberty to make such resistance is inseparable from human nature and from our political constitution ; and so long as any body of strikers keep themselves within the bounds of the law they have a right to the protection of that law. But those who choose to strike, for any reason whatever, have no right to interfere with those who do not ; and for any strikers to attempt to prevent

others working because they are willing to work upon the required terms, is an infringement of individual liberty, and a virtual conspiracy against the order and well-being of society. The threat of such interference is, to begin with, unmanly and cowardly; when that threat results in intimidation and violence, then a public outrage is committed, and the perpetrators of that outrage are amendable to law, and should be punished as disturbers of the public peace.

### OPPRESSION AND EVIL OF TRADES' UNIONS.

In like manner all combinations of men which partake of the nature of trades' unions are injurious in practice, if not false in principle. They may begin with a good motive; but they end in bad results. As voluntary organizations, formed for educational or protective purposes, there is no law by which they can be repressed; and, in so far as they promote union and afford protection, they prove of service to the laboring classes. When, however, those combinations assume a power of dictation and control, both over their own members, and over the industrial classes generally; and when they enact laws, and insist upon terms, which destroy freedom of intercourse between employers and employed, and by virtual terrorism and bondage place a restriction upon all the trade operations of the community, except as they may be fashioned upon their rule, and performed in obedience to their mandate, then they obviously usurp a function which is inimical to the spirit of the Constitution, and to the orderly regulation of society; and assuming, as they do very rapidly, the proportions of a colossal despotism, they become, like Virgil's monster—"horrid, hideous, huge, and blind,"—a curse rather than

a blessing, from which humanity revolts, and which the law should hold in check.

In the majority of instances trades' unions are under the control of cunning and designing men, who impose upon the credulity of the laboring classes, and through their unsuspecting agency seek the gratification of their own passions, and the enrichment of their own purses. On such a subject experience should prove a trusty guide. What has been in the past furnishes a fair index of what may be expected in the future. In the history of unions and strikes there is scarcely a redeeming feature. The good they have sought to accomplish has been vastly counterbalanced by the evil they have produced. Had the primary object in every instance been attained it would utterly fail to compensate for the sacrifices entailed, and for the miseries endured. It is rarely, however, that a strike is successful. The employers can generally hold out longer than the men. It is impossible that unions can supply funds for the support of their members beyond a given point; and hence after the loss of millions of dollars in wages, and the experience of sorrows which have proved worse than the "bitterness of death," there have been added shame and humiliation, and defeat. Such experience as has been gained, and such facts and figures as might be presented concerning unions and strikes, in both Great Britain and the United States, ought to open the eyes of the working classes to the futility of strikes in general, and to the sinister motives of the union leaders in particular. No good ever has, and no good ever will spring from them. It is contrary to the law of nature. As soon expect grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles, as order and prosperity from the unconstitutional interfer-

ence of trades' unions, and the frenzied but powerless resistance of strikers.

On this ground alone, apart from the deplorable excesses into which it degenerated, the late railway strike may be regretted and condemned ; and chief among the lessons which the laboring classes should learn from the bitter ordeal through which they have passed is that which teaches the advisability of their withdrawing resolutely from such combinations and such movements. It is derogatory to their character to be identified with them ; it is endangering the public peace to aid in any form in carrying into effect the selfish schemes of intriguing men who denounce authority in others that they may become tyrants themselves, and whose ambition it is to make the working classes their tools and slaves in the unequal contest they wage ; and alike for their personal independence and honor, for their domestic comfort and social order, and for the commercial stability and political reputation of their land, working men of every grade should eschew connection with the unions, and with the strikes they originate. With the collapse of the former, the danger of the latter will cease ; and with these hydra-headed monsters crushed, a firm foundation could be laid for industrial co-operation in its truest sense, when upon the laboring population of the country an era of prosperity and contentment would dawn.

#### COMMUNISM IMPRACTICABLE AND DESTRUCTIVE.

Even this, however, would not warrant the assumption that an equal division of property should be made, and that henceforth all distinctions in society should be

abolished. It is one of the wildest of chimeras to imagine that there can be a perfect equality of possession and position. The analogies of nature, and the history of the world, uniformly discountenance the idea. In the primitive church even, when they that believed sold their possessions, and had all things common, there is no evidence that it was done in obedience to a divine law; or that it was intended to initiate a permanent and universal custom as characteristic of Christian fellowship. All the evidence, indeed, shows that the circumstances were exceptional, and that the act itself was voluntary. Nor did the practice long continue; for in the development of the Christian idea—in the planting of the Christian Church—there was manifested not only a variety of intellectual gifts, and a diversity of spiritual offices, but also a wide dissimilarity in the character and extent of worldly possessions.

This in every age and place is a necessary result of the order established in the universe. The constitution of society requires that there be masters and servants. As an eminent writer has observed, were all to start upon a level to-day in point of worldly goods, the distinction between rich and poor would spring up to-morrow. What is popularly denominated the Communistic theory is both illogical and impracticable. It could not succeed, simply because it is unnatural; and the only instance in modern times in which the experiment has been forced upon the world was remarkable as much for glaring injustice and heartless cruelty, as for ignorant folly and selfish ambition. Those, therefore, who would persuade the laboring classes that labor is a badge of servitude, and as such incompatible with the spirit of freedom, that redemption from the universal

thraldom is now dawning, and that in the good time coming there will be between all classes a common relation and a common fund, and who in anticipation of this "promised rest"—of this "golden age"—of this "elysium of the gods"—advise resistance to authority, and a crusade against the rights of property, are simply false prophets, blind leaders of the blind ; or, what is worse, they are wolves in sheep's clothing, waiting only their opportunity to plunder and devour.

### A GLARING DELUSION.

It is creditable to the people that so few comparatively have been led astray by this delusion. A moment's reflection must convince them of the utter insincerity of those who would thus ensnare them. Has there been a single instance in which these Communist leaders have evinced a disposition to make common cause with their poorer brethren by an equal distribution of their goods ? If they possess real estate, or can boast of a good bank account, have they shown any willingness to renounce their proprietorship, and to throw all into a common fund, that distribution might be made to every man according as he has need ? That is an argument of another kind. Consistency requires its application ; and the reluctance of those who would be the founders of a new social era to ratify their representations by their example, is suggestive of a consciousness that their theory is unsound, and that their promises are delusive.

## THE WAY TO WEALTH AND INDEPENDENCE.

That the laboring classes may acquire not only a competent income, but an independent fortune, their best friends heartily desire. Nothing would be more gratifying than to see them and their families well dressed, to know that their tables are well supplied, and to find evidence in their possession of good deposits in the banks, and of safe investments in real estate. These things would add immeasurably to their self-respect, to their social independence, to their political power; and they would contribute proportionately to the wealth and independence of the State. Nor are these possessions really unattainable by the majority of working men; but they must be acquired by industry and frugality rather than by fraud and force. How can men honestly claim that for which they have not toiled, or which has never enriched their families? Even to "covet" that which another has earned by hard work, or successful speculation, or inherited, maybe, from fortunate ancestors, is prohibited by the moral law. Much more dishonorable and iniquitous would it be to enter into any conspiracy against the rights of property, or to resort to any trickery and violence by which the heritors of private property might be dispossessed, or the treasures of public funds become subject to mob control.

In such a contingency the weak and virtuous would suffer; the strong and brutal would triumph. Where order is now supreme, anarchy would run riot; and for well-regulated, albeit but poorly compensated labor, there would gradually spring up a condition of universal indolence, with all its concomitant woes. The work-

ing classes, of all others, have most reason to dread the inauguration of such a revolting injustice. They would prove eventually the most pitiable victims. Their best interests would be sacrificed ; their most sacred and cherished rights would be trampled in the dust. Those, therefore, who would persuade them to lend their influence in furtherance of any crusade against capital, or in promoting the adoption of any Communistic platform, are their veriest enemies—traitors alike to the working-men and to the State. The laboring classes should renounce intercourse with them, should reprobate their insidious designs, should boldly denounce their revolutionary ideas ; and whether or not they are satisfied with present industrial arrangements, or with the rate of compensation they now receive for the work they perform, they should proclaim with no uncertain voice, in no equivocal terms, but in language which every class may understand, and in terms which shall vibrate through the universal heart, that they wish to acquire independence and wealth only by manly, virtuous toil ; and that whatever struggles may betide them it shall be their ambition to reverence authority and to obey law.

### WORKINGMEN IN POLITICS.

In this connection it is not impertinent to express a doubt as to whether the movement recently started for the formation of a Political Labor Party will be attended with any satisfactory results. The place of the working man in politics, as the phrase goes, it is neither difficult to determine, nor just to deny. He is without doubt a power in polities, especially during election times. The astutest politician knows full well the value

of his vote and influence. It is a pity that so much disreputable trickery is adopted to secure them. The tendency is to debase the public mind, and to prevent the legitimate exercise of the political franchise. It proves conclusively, however, that the working classes can influence in a very appreciable degree the issues of a contest; and it suggests that to the wants and wishes of such important factors in the State, respectful consideration, at least, is due.

There cannot be a doubt that workingmen are often deluded by promises which were never meant to be fulfilled. Candidates for municipal honors, for State Legislatures, and even for Congress itself, readily commit themselves to assurances of reform for the benefit of the country in general, and of the workingmen in particular, in order thereby to ensure their suffrages on election day. When the election is over the promises are forgotten. The object henceforth to be aimed at by the successful candidates is personal emolument rather than the public good. Hence corrupt bargains are formed; hence fraudulent issues are raised; hence jobbery and robbery reign supreme; and hence in the struggle which ensues for office and gain the working classes are more neglected, more impoverished, and more abused. They have, therefore, just reason for complaint; and any arrangement by which a loftier standard can be raised, and a healthier tone can be given to our system, and through which the domestic and social interests of the great masses of the people can be more effectually advanced, will prove of lasting advantage to the nation. But it is more than doubtful whether this can be done by the formation of a distinct labor party. The need is

not sufficient, the basis is not wide enough to warrant the hope of success. There is hardly a district throughout the whole Union in which a labor candidate, considered simply as such, would have a fair prospect of being returned to Congress in face of the opposing influences against which he would have to struggle.

### EFFICIENT LEGISLATION NEEDED.

Nor is it indeed an exclusive system of class legislation that is now specially desired. Such legislation is of necessity partial ; and while, perchance, it may benefit some particular interest or trade, in doing that it may undesignedly inflict injury upon others. In a well-regulated community all the various interests quietly harmonize ; and the aim of the Government should be to conserve and benefit the whole, rather than to befriend one at the expense of the rest. In choosing representatives for the people those should be preferred who are characterized for their intelligence and independence, for their integrity and humanity ; who will take a just and comprehensive view of all the relations and circumstances of the country, and who will strictly and conscientiously aim to preserve peace and promote prosperity. With such men the interests of the working classes will be safer, and the general legislation of the country will be better attended to than if inexperienced and incompetent men be elected solely because they are identified with, or represent some particular trade or institution. The country needs patriots, not mercenaries ; and the laboring classes will render essential service by throwing their influence into a movement for the election of such men. This may require organization ; and organ-

ization there should be. That, however, does not involve the formation of a new party, distinct from and antagonistic to the existing parties, and committed to the nomination and support of certain candidates.

### ABROGATION OF OLD POLITICAL PARTIES.

It is perhaps time that old party lines were to a great extent broken down. The party shibboleth has become a curse to the nation. Both Republicans and Democrats have been exacting and corrupt; and in the bitter, relentless war they are waging with each other they are blasting the reputation, and annulling the influence of their land. One is not one whit better than the other. Neither has been true to its professions; and neither has any special, exclusive claim to be considered the workingman's party. The history of each is stamped with extravagance and fraud; and few tears need be shed as their knell is sounded, and their requiem pronounced. It will be wise for workingmen to stand aloof from party organizations, and to remain unpledged for future votes. Their vantage ground is high. One false step may rob them of their prize. They should resist blandishment and bribe; they should scorn corruption and crime. What they want is good government, good legislation, good trade, good food, good homes; and, indeed, a general improvement in the condition and affairs of the nation.

And these things are within their reach—yea, easy to attain, if the right men be elected to office. The working classes themselves should judge of the fitness of a candidate by the record of his life. Some men now in office should never receive another vote. They

are covered with infamy. With the best opportunities for doing good, they have schemed and plundered only to enrich themselves at the expense of the people. Let them be forever tabooed ; and whether the nominees of Tammany Hall, or of Republican, or Democratic Conventions, no candidates should receive the suffrages of the workingmen who have been identified with "Rings," who have been convicted of bribery and corruption, who have shown an incompetency for office, who have been recklessly extravagant of the public money, and who cannot prove themselves to be both able and patriotic. The result would be a very speedy change in both the enactment and administration of law, in the trade of the country, and in the condition and prospects of the people ; and without even the formation of a distinct labor party, the working classes would be better attended to than at any former time.

### THE POSSIBILITY OF MISUNDERSTANDINGS.

When the best has been done to prevent them difficulties will sometimes arise between employers and employed. In the complications of trade it may be necessary to readjust prices, or to impose fresh regulations for the hours of work, etc. These may appear to the men, at first sight, as oppressive, and may tend to excite a spirit of resistance. That is the time for mutual deliberation, —for friendly conference. A difference of opinion need not engender antagonism of feeling. As we have seen, the interests are one; and often a proper explanation at the start would suffice to prevent future trouble.

It is not reasonable that employers should assume to make any alterations which in their judgment circum-

stances may warrant, relying upon the acquiescence of their men, without vouchsafing any explanatory remark, or any conciliatory promise. There is too much of the arrogant and despotic in such a course. It is based essentially on the old, abrogated law of slavery, which says to a man "go, and he goeth ; and to another, come, and he cometh ; and to my servant do this, and he doeth it."

Neither is it any more reasonable for workingmen to refuse under any circumstances to entertain a proposal for reduced wages; or for increased work ; and denouncing the selfishness and perfidy of their employers, without understanding the reason of their action, resolve to effect a stoppage of work, neither doing themselves, nor allowing others to do in their places. In such a course there would be more of despotism and injustice than in the former. The men would virtually proclaim themselves dictators, and for the gratification of their passions both law and reason must be trampled under foot. It is inevitable that disastrous results follow upon such a course. An open warfare is proclaimed between forces which are mutually dependent, and between which unbroken harmony should prevail ; and when passion is aroused, and resistance has begun, who can arrest the overflowing tide? As the wise man said, "The beginning of strife is like the letting out of water."

#### VALUE OF ARBITRATION.

Can no remedy be applied for the evils which already exist? Can no preventive be suggested against their recurrence in the future? This is undoubtedly possible. It may be found without difficulty in a wise system of

ARBITRATION. The parties immediately involved in a dispute are not, upon *prima facie* grounds, the most suitable to propose terms for the settlement of that dispute. By referring it to a third party, uninfluenced by prejudice, able to dissect it in all its hidden fibres and outward facts, and resolved, as enthroned upon the seat of justice, to hold the balance with an even hand,—as Shakespeare has it, “nothing to extenuate, or set aught down in malice,”—the difficulty is removed at once from the control of passion, and the atmosphere of prejudice, and must receive such an adjudication as the principles involved may warrant, and as the public interests demand.

What practical obstacle can be started? is it not feasible? What is required for its success? does it need anything more than a recognition of mutual privileges and rights?—than the manifestation of a spirit of forbearance and toleration?—than an earnest desire to render and receive privately and publicly what is honorable and fair? And are there any among either employers or employed who are not willing to admit the validity of these terms, or to bind themselves by them? Will either party so far arrogate the possession of wisdom and justice as to refuse concession to the other? Is the genius of patriotism so far dethroned, and does the fiend of selfishness so literally reign supreme, that not even for the conservation of the commonwealth, and the protection of life and home, are men willing to sacrifice their pride and prejudice, and, untrammelled by the prestige of their order, or the laws of their union, meet their fellow-men on a broad and open ground? And are we to be told that in this day of advanced civilization, and “popular Christianity,”—when so many millions of

dollars are expended in support of our schools and churches, and in the inculcation of virtue and truth, it is not possible to find a number of men who will dispassionately and impartially arbitrate between any public company and their employers? The very suggestion of any such difficulty implies a reflection upon the honor of the nation. It is not true that there is an unwillingness to adopt the principle of arbitration; or that it is impossible to lay down a satisfactory basis on which arbitration may be exercised.

In Great Britain the feasibility of the plan has been signally demonstrated. The disputes in the mining districts of the North of England have been settled upon this principle. Even the shipbuilding strike on the Clyde of Scotland, after a duration of sixteen weeks, and the endurance of untold privations, has terminated by the application of this law. How much better in each case had arbitration been resorted to as a preventive rather than as a cure! At the latest moment, however, a recognition of the principle is a concession to the claims of reason and justice, through which brute force will be subordinated to intellectual and moral power.

Shall not the example so wisely set in Britain be followed in America? Are not all classes among us as willing to conciliate and equalize? as the old Hebrew prophet said, "to do justly, and to love mercy?" It requires but a beginning; and why should not the operative classes take the lead? Why, in the matters which are still in dispute, whether on the railways or in the coal regions, should not the employees approach their masters with terms of conciliation? And why, to prevent a recurrence of these deplorable misunderstand-

ings, should not each meet the other half way with an expressed willingness to wipe out the record of the past, and to lay down for themselves a method of amicable adjustment for the future? A generous advance on either side would meet with a cordial response on the other. Both masters and men are, it is well known, tired of the dispute. They want to see an end of the difficulty. There is a deep, irrepressible yearning for peace. The method of its attainment is easy. By adopting the principle now urged a blissful calm may be ensured. It may require a mutual giving-way, not of principle, but of feeling, not of honor, but of pride. Do not the exigencies of the country demand the concession? and in view of the momentous interests involved, will not you, employers,—will not you, workingmen, crush within you the lingering elements of a selfish and cruel antagonism, and from the wreck of the late disastrous struggle evoke a fresh the spirit of amity and love?

### EVIL HABITS OF WORKINGMEN.

There is yet another theme which this labor crisis forces into view. The laboring classes must be just to themselves, and to their families, if they would elicit general sympathy, and if they would fortify themselves against a day of trial. A reformation is needed in many of their social habits. It will not be pretended by those who know them best that they are always and scrupulously provident in their ways. Many brilliant exceptions may undoubtedly be found. There are men who work steadily, who live frugally, who save carefully, and who strive earnestly to elevate their order, and to enrich their land with the blessings of virtue no less

than with the fruits of toil. These are the men who discard credit at the stores, who eschew intercourse in the saloons, who make deposits in the banks, who buy land and build houses, who go to church and visit libraries, whose homes are the abodes of comfort, and whose families are patterns of respectability.

This cannot, unhappily, be said of all the working classes. The conduct of by far the greater proportion of them presents a darker picture. With all their anxiety to get money they are recklessly improvident in its expenditure. They do not know, or do not try how to make the most of small wages, or the best of adverse circumstances. Their idea of life hardly travels beyond the limit of the passing moment ; or their conception of pleasure is debased to the lowest level of sensual indulgence. Hence their associations are vulgar, and their pursuits are grovelling ; and hence, too, the money they often earn by such an expenditure of strength, and by such an endurance of fatigue,—and which wisely expended would secure for themselves and their families at least a plain, substantial fare,—is squandered in drink, in tobacco, and in other questionable gratifications.

One of the first results of such an insane course is to run into debt ; and following in the steps of this, there come poverty and discomfort. Such a representation is not a libel upon the working classes. There are a thousand hideous and revolting facts to demonstrate its truth. If evidence were wanted of the need of a social reformation, it may be found in the ragged garments, in the wretched homes, in the wasted strength, in the premature graves, of the sons of toil, and of their wives and children. These things have come directly

within the observation of the writer. He has had to do with the broken health, with the broken hearts, and with the broken homes, of thousands of the operative classes ; and he can testify to the social vices, and to the domestic miseries, and to the personal recriminations, which are poisoning the life-blood of the nation, which are sapping the very foundations of society, and which threaten to transform the land into a pandemonium of lust and woe, over whose portals may be inscribed the awful words of Dante—"They who enter here, must leave all hope behind !"

And why has there been, or why should there be, this utter abandonment of hope and virtue ? It is not because there has been a lack of work, or a lack of money, or a lack of strong incentive to do better ; it is rather because the masses of the people have been swayed by corrupt impulse, and lead astray by evil example, and under the conjoint influence of these have been drawn insidiously and unconsciously into a mode of life which implies a perversion of the noblest faculties, and which must inevitably end in ruin and disgrace.

### THE REFORMATION NEEDED.

Now any change in the condition of the working classes must have a primary relation to these facts. There will be little practical advantage, either to workingmen themselves, or to their families, or to society, from an increase of wages, unless there be engendered the disposition and the power to make a better use of the augmented income. The workingmen must reform themselves. It should be their aim to prove themselves

worthy of, no less than entitled to, a larger remuneration for the services they render. They can do this by living with more economy and sobriety. There is no need of, there is no excuse for, so much drinking, and smoking, and chewing, and sundry other evils which are inseparably associated with these. They are at best wasteful, if not disgusting. It is quite time the workingman learnt that the publican is not his truest friend, and that the indulgence of his sensual passions neither adds to his political power, nor ensures him domestic comfort. As a great statesman has recently put it, the home is the "unit of civilization;" and whilst for the completeness of that unit wise sanitary regulations are needed to begin with, as he urged, it is no less imperative upon the occupants of that home to infuse into it a spirit of confidence and love, and to diffuse around it an air of calm and joy.

It is the province of the workingmen—of the husbands, of the fathers, of the sons, of the brothers—of our land to take the first steps in the fulfilment of this pure and elevated mission, by the manifestation of tempers, and the formation of habits, and the pursuit of pleasures which shall be at once virtuous and ennobling. Their wives, and mothers, and daughters, and sisters, will soon catch the holy influence, and join in the humane work. The change will be as beautiful and sweet as spring-tide flowers after the winter storm ; and in the homes based upon such principles, and regulated by such a spirit, there will be found the surest guarantee for the preservation of order and peace against any of the demoralizing scenes implied in a riot, or strife.

What say you, workingmen ? Will you not cultivate self-respect ? Will you not aspire to independent lives ?

Will you not struggle to make your families respected, and your homes happy ? and by industry and intelligence, and virtue, will you not leave an impress upon your age more durable than tablets of brass or monuments of stone ?

### PROVINCE OF THE GOVERNMENT.

It is impossible to close this paper without a reference to the position and duty of the Government in this crisis. The policy of the Government, indeed, may in no small measure determine the issue of the crisis. Is it fair to charge upon the Government any responsibility, direct or indirect, for the scenes which have already been enacted ? May these scenes be traced through any remote cause, or by any occult influence, to an improper legislation, or to a feeble executive ? Or, are they, through the imperceptible but certain operation of natural laws, the necessary consequence, the inevitable product of the principles enunciated, and of the tactics employed, during the late Presidential contest ? In view of many of the deplorable facts which have been brought to light within the last two or three years, implicating the integrity of some of the most prominent men in the nation ; and in view of the outrageous assaults upon personal honor, and the wanton sacrifice of national prestige, for the gratification of party malice and revenge, and for the attainment of only political ends, is it much to be wondered at that in the rebound of these things the reins of authority have been relaxed, and the passions of the mob stirred up beyond license and control ?

There may be no practical utility at present in the discussion of such a question, notwithstanding it touches the secret spring, the hidden motives, of much of the phenomena with which we are now confronted. The more immediately important question is whether the Government in the exercise of its legitimate functions can allay the prevailing agitation, and prevent a recurrence of the evil? in other words, whether it can devise any method by which without the contravention of individual liberty, or public safety, all unseemly conflict between capital and labor can be avoided, and the claims and rights of employers and employed be harmonized? This is doubtless one of the highest ends of Government, since in this are involved the contentment and prosperity of all classes of the community.

### IMPARTIALITY OF THE GOVERNMENT.

It is the special characteristic of our Government that it not only exists for the people, but that it derives its existence from the people. The purest models of antiquity have suggested its character and form. Its theory is perfect. In beautiful harmony it blends the magisterial and the paternal; and whilst springing from the people, and therefore amenable to the people, it is as much its prerogative to provide for their wants, as to punish for their crimes. That Government will realize in the fullest sense the prime idea of its being which promotes by wise legislation the order and comfort of the people, and which secures by a proper exercise of authority protection to both property and life.

In this respect there is, and can be no distinction of classes and persons. The poor equally with the rich

are the objects of good government; the private individual no less than the public company is entitled to its supervision; and as the history of the world amply demonstrates, those periods have been most signalized by industry and progress, and those nations have been most fruitful in the blessings of civilization and peace, in which the administration has been based upon principles of liberty and justice, and in which the social necessities of the people have been provided for as well as their strictly political interests considered. Between the two, indeed, it is difficult to draw any broad line of distinction, since the purely social becomes the basis of what is technically called political; whereas in popular usage political claims are nothing more or less than the promotion of selfish party ends at the expense of the public good.

### INFLUENCE OF THE GOVERNMENT.

It might be more than history would justify for even flattery to affirm that the Government of the United States has always realized its own ideal, or successfully accomplished all the purposes of its founders. That it has exerted a potent influence upon the human race, and that it has achieved a wondrous success in the development of sound principles, and in the establishment of useful institutions, the merest reference to the history of the last hundred years would sufficiently show. It is not an empty boast that within that period its history is unsurpassed in the record of nations. From an area of about 800,000 square miles the country has grown into the possession of territory measuring at least 3,603,800 square miles. From a population of only 2,756,044

there has been an enormous growth to 44,675,000. At the commencement of the century mining operations were nil, and canals, railways, and telegraphs were unknown; whereas now our mines yield at least \$1,000,000,090, our canals extend to more than 10,000 miles, our railways thread the country to the extent of 74,658 miles, whilst our telegraph wires stretch over 80,000 miles and annually wing through the country 14,000,000 messages. From about \$20,000,000 our manufactures have reached an annual value of \$4,200,000,000, whilst the foreign commerce of the country has expanded to an average of \$700,000,000. Where there were no banks there are now about 6,000, with an aggregate capital of \$500,000,000. In place of 9 there are 500 colleges, with a public school organization which is worked at an annual cost of \$75,000,000. There are 65,000 churches with sitting accommodations for 25,000,000 persons, and with property to the value of \$400,000,000. There were 46 printing presses at the commencement of the century; their number is now legion; whilst by their prodigious power at least 1,600,000,000 newspapers and periodicals are annually issued for circulation. The public libraries of the country reach the astonishing number of 165,000, whilst in these there are not less than 50,000,000 volumes.

Are not such figures almost fabulous? do they not illustrate equally the resources of the country, and the energy of the people? Is it possible that such extraordinary progress could have been made without the action of a wise and beneficent Government? and with such changes in its favor what nation is more entitled to admiration? or what people are more fitted to exercise

a commanding influence in the advancing civilization of the world?

### CONDITIONS OF NATIONAL SUCCESS.

But with nations as with individuals there is required the observance of certain laws. The attainment or the continuance of success, even in a material sense, is dependent in a large degree on political and moral rectitude. It is righteousness that establishes a nation; or as another inspired authority has it, wisdom and knowledge must be the stability of the times. A corrupt government in its very nature will engender public demoralization; and as the inevitable result of licentiousness and fraud, whether among governors or governed, there will be disintegration and decay. All the analogies of nature suggest this; all the examples of history confirm it. In the decline and fall of the Roman Empire there was first the insidious operation of avarice and lust, of ambition and revenge. Equally so the degradation of Spain in the nineteenth, as contrasted with its glory in the sixteenth century, illustrates the effects of bad government and defective morality.

### CAUSES FOR APPREHENSION.

It would be hazardous to affirm that in the United States a period of retrogression and decay has set in. The future may be more brilliant than the past in all the essential elements of prosperity. But notwithstanding this there are very grave causes of apprehension. The present social condition of the country is not indicative of repose or progress. In the very agitation which has distracted the public mind there are symptoms of a dis-

order which may yet break upon us in overwhelming fury. It is not, however, as some foreign critics are pleased to say, the natural effect of the system we have adopted, by which a proper equilibrium of power is destroyed, and through which popular passion is allowed to usurp the functions of legislative government. The system is essentially sound. Any defect chargeable upon it is in practical development rather than in abstract principles and laws. As exemplified by the founders of the Constitution,—in the hands of such men as Washington, Jefferson, Adams, Lincoln, and their illustrious colleagues,—the Government adapted itself to every emergency, and proved sufficient for every crisis; and whilst conserving liberty and order it promoted industry and wealth.

There has been unquestionably a falling off in the character of our public men during the last twenty years. The occupants of some of the highest offices in the nation have been men of incompetency and corruption. As one inevitable result utter feebleness has characterized the administration of the law, whilst in the method of transacting public business there has been a melancholy departure from the principles and examples of our forefathers. Personal emolument has taken the place of patriotic zeal; intrigues for private gain have led to a sacrifice of public virtue; and painful as the fact is, it is nevertheless true, that during the centennial period of our history, there were exhibited scenes of treachery and fraud which scarcely find their parallel in the blackest forms of Roman corruption, or in the boldest bribery which stained the fair fame of Britain a century ago.

It is hardly to be doubted that these things have had a demoralizing influence upon the public mind. They have relaxed the reins of power ; they have weakened the restraints of law ; they have ignored the claims of virtue ; they have frustrated the very ends of justice ; and by their spirit, and tendency, and influence, they have prepared the way for the crisis through which we are passing, and have rendered imminent the very convulsion which our critics predicate will yet rend the Republic in sunder.

#### DIRECT CAUSES OF THE NATIONAL DISQUIET.

It must, however, be allowed that a series of subsidiary causes have been in constant operation. The war of the rebellion destroyed the amity and impoverished the resources of many of the States. An enormous debt was hung like a millstone round the neck of the Union. Without prudently looking into the future, or calmly calculating the cost, capitalists and merchants recklessly rushed into speculation, in the purchase of land, in the building of houses, in the manufacture of goods, in the extension of railways, &c. By immigration from foreign countries an unproductive population was rapidly augmented. The market became stocked with unsaleable goods. In the frenzy of the hour large additions were made to Federal, State, and municipal debts. By restrictive regulations the arms of business became paralysed ; by excessive taxation the income of the people was crippled ; and gradually, like a gaunt devouring, unappeasable giant, stagnation appeared amongst us ; and our manufactures were reduced, and our foreign trade was checked, and many of our bonds

were depreciated in the market, and much of our money became locked up in the banks, and some of our oldest houses began to totter, and thousands of our operatives sat down in gloomy despondency, and from the heart of the nation there went up to heaven an agonizing cry for labor and bread.

### PREROGATIVE OF GOVERNMENT.

It is the prerogative of the Government to meet the evil boldly ; and whatever defect may be inherent in the Government, or may attach to its practical administration, it has without doubt the power to mitigate, if not remove entirely, the evils complained of, or, at least, to lay the foundation by prudent legislation for returning prosperity to the country. To say that this is impracticable, or that any such effort does not legitimately fall within the province of the Government, is virtually to plead that the Government has abdicated its functions, and that with all the expenses incident to its existence, it is for practical purposes a nullity and a bugbear. The most complicated cases of private wrong, or of public disorder, fall under its jurisdiction, since every citizen is amenable to it, and asks protection from it; and in the exercise of its functions it may and should harmonize the highest claims of individual liberty with the sternest demands of national justice.

This by no means implies a power of needless interference in the personal or family relations, or in the business enterprises, or in the capital and property possessions of the community. It is competent for the Government to enact certain laws by which residence within its bounds shall be regulated, or in conformity

with which business relations may be carried on. But none of these can infringe the inherent rights of humanity, as established and revealed by the Creator, and as recognized among all civilized nations. It is rather to ensure the proper exercise and development of these that Government is organized, in obedience to and as representative of the will of the Universal Lawgiver; and when in any instance the assertion of legislative authority, or executive power, clashes with the fundamental principles on which society is constituted, a wrong is enacted, and mischief will follow.

#### LIBERTY AND PROPERTY MUST BE PROTECTED.

On this principle the Government has no power to interfere with the possession of private property, except for the satisfaction of the law, and the protection of the public interests, when a fraud has been perpetrated, or a high crime committed. It cannot require a laborer to surrender his household effects, or any one single article from among them, to form part of a national stock, any more than it can demand of the banker that he throw open the vaults where his specie is secured, or the capitalist that he resign unconditionally the title-deeds of his real estate, whether in land or buildings. In each case there is the inalienable right of possession. A chair, or a dollar, or a house, honestly acquired, is as much the personal property of the individual who owns it as either his hands or his feet; and so long as he acts in conformity with the law of the country in which he was born, or in which he has become naturalized, no power in that country can justly deprive him of the one, any

more than of the other. If a citizen of his own accord chooses to surrender the whole or a part of his personal property for the public good, the Government is authorized to accept the gift, and to apply it in accordance with the wishes of the donor. Or, if any number of individuals, for the gratification of any peculiar whim, or for the experimental developement of any particular principle in social economy, unitedly and voluntarily agree to throw all their possessions into a common fund, and abolishing all distinctions of rich and poor, each work on the same footing, and all be rewarded with the same terms, the Government has no right of intervention, so long as its taxes are paid, and both the civil and moral laws are observed.

In such cases, however, there is nothing analogous to the Communistic theory, which requires a general levelling, and regardless of all other considerations, as well physical as moral, a uniformity of income. There is, indeed, between them the widest possible difference, since the one act would be voluntary, whilst the other would imply violence. Without perfect unanimity of sentiment, and, resulting from that, a general concert of action, no attempt even could be made to practise a Communistic system. In the nature of things, and according to the very laws which govern the universe, such oneness of mind and habit is impossible. It must spring up spontaneously not be produced by coercive measures ; and were the Government to interfere to compel any individual against his will to surrender his property, and to conform to a dull, unbroken uniformity of work and wages, it would simply exceed its own functions, and would strike a fatal blow at its own existence, and at the order of society, it is created to conserve.

There is no more possibility of success now than there was in the days of Wat Tyler and Jack Cade in England in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, or than during the French Revolution of 1789, which literally paved the way for a military despotism. Yea, more than this, there is less reason now, and especially in America, for any Communistic organization than in the periods thus mentioned. More social equality prevails; more political power is enjoyed; and should the Government entertain in the slightest degree the wild, illogical, and irrational propositions of a few crazy, theorising demagogues, or of any body of selfish, sensual, indolent, merciless "roughs," who might demand, by the aid of fire and plunder, equality of station, and equality of goods, it would prove itself unworthy of confidence and respect, and should give place to "honester men"—as old Cromwell put it. There is no danger that such a catastrophe will befall the nation. The very mention of Communism is sufficient to excite terror, and to ensure its condemnation.

#### THE GOVERNMENT CANNOT BECOME A TRADE CORPORATION.

Nor is it any more clear that the Government can interpose by any direct influence to regulate the question of labor and wages between employers and employed. It is utterly inadmissible that the Government can become a labor corporation, undertaking to run the railways, or to work the mines, or to manufacture any of the various kinds of goods which may be in demand in the market, or which may find employment for the people. Any such proposition is based upon a pure

misapprehension of the primary functions of the Government. The very first attempt to give it practical effect would bring the Government into collision with corporate bodies and private tradesmen. Their rights would be infringed. If the Government should start as a trader in one department, it must begin business in all ; or, somewhere an inequality would exist, or an unfair advantage would be taken ; and should the Government succeed in establishing a great commercial monopoly, from whose prices no deviation could be made, and by whose laws all industrial interests must be governed, where would be the liberty of individual action ? and where the stimulus to public enterprise ?

As a matter of economy it is doubtful whether the Government could work to the same advantage as a properly organized company, or a single energetic tradesman ; and, therefore, independently of the enormous appropriations which would be required to buy up all the railways, and other business of the country, it is morally certain that the revenue would be disproportionate to the expenditure, and that national bankruptcy would ensue. But apart altogether from that,—which is mentioned only as a side issue,—the essential point of the argument is, that the Government cannot undertake any trade relation without sacrificing its proper character, and infringing the liberty of some portion of its subjects.

#### CONDITIONS ON WHICH PUBLIC CHARTERS MAY BE GRANTED.

It is doubtless a fair question to raise whether in granting a charter to any business corporation the Government is not authorised to make such stipulations as

it may deem necessary for the due transaction of the business concerned, and for the safety health, and comfort of those who may be employed. This does come naturally and properly within its sphere, since the very existence of the business is primarily dependent upon its permission and sanction ; and since it has no right to sanction an undertaking upon conditions which may prove inimical to the public good.

Thus, if a railway company apply for the charter of a new line, and if with that there be sought the additional privilege of a land or money grant to aid in the construction of the line, the Government would not only be empowered, but perfectly justified, in demanding, not only that the line should be of a certain gauge, or that the carriages should be built upon an approved model, but also that the employees should not be required to work more than a stipulated number of hours, and only upon clearly defined terms. This might be necessary to balance the trade forces which are to be brought into operation, and to render the whole subservient to the public good, since without such stipulations the strong might take advantage of the weak, or the rich impose upon the poor. But when the Government has thus laid down the law it can hardly interfere further, except in cases where the charter is violated, or wherein some other portion of the civil code is contravened. Within the limits of that charter the company and their employees have the undoubted right to make any subsidiary arrangements which they may think advisable for the success of the enterprise, and which are mutually satisfactory.

## VALIDITY AND OBLIGATION OF TRADE CONTRACTS.

The same is true of any other public company or mercantile firm. In every business organization a certain amount of liberty is necessary, and that in the nature of things implies power. Each party to the engagement supplies a distinct kind of capital, valued in the market, not by an arbitrary law of proportion, or a uniform standard of weight and measure, but by the varying usages of society which regulate the supply and the demand, and through which money capital is sometimes rendered unproductive, and labor capital is only partially required. It is, therefore, competent to each to make the best bargain he can, so long as a due regard is had to the other primary and fundamental conditions which are assumed. The Government cannot step in and say that employers shall not pay more than a certain ratio of wages, or that employees shall not receive less than a certain sum. Nor is there, indeed, any power to compel the masters to make an equal division of their profits among the men, any more than the law can require the employees to work for nothing, because under some circumstances the business may be carried on at a loss.

The whole thing resolves itself into a mutual agreement. It is of the essence of such an agreement that each party should be willing to give and take. On one side, at least, an immense risk is incurred; but that, again, is counterbalanced by the prospect of great gain. On the other a positive and regular income is insured, on condition that a prescribed course of duty be performed. When rightly balanced the two forces thus

employed, so far from proving antagonistic to each other, are mutually serviceable and dependent. Each advances the interests of the other, and through the two combined the convenience of society, and the growth of the nation are secured. Neither has power over the other, except for the service he has stipulated to render. To that extent each is responsible to the other ; and here the natural prerogative of the Government comes into play, in requiring from each a fulfilment of the contract, and in enforcing justice between man and man.

Beyond a certain limit the Government cannot interfere with the formation of the contract. That must be left to the option of the parties primarily concerned, and must depend upon the nature of the circumstances in which they are respectively placed. But when the contract has been made, and when upon the strength of that work has been begun, each party has the right of protection in his person, his property, his work, and his reward ; and it is in affording such protection, with all the security and stimulus it necessarily involves, that one of the highest functions of the Government is performed. Should the contract be broken, no matter by which party, the other has redress through a judicial process ; and if whilst at work, or as the result of work, there be danger of assault, then even the military arm is, or may be stretched out in defence.

Is more needed ? Can the Government consistently attempt more ? There is liberty of action, yet security of possession ; the power of individual choice, yet amenability to a general law ; and in such a state is there not, at least, an approximation to the bright ideal of which Plato dreamed, and Cicero declaimed ? If disputes should afterwards arise in the practical arrange-

ment of business matters—if, on the one hand, employers should wish to reduce the wages of their men, because of a slackness of trade; or, if on the other, employees should desire an advance of wages, through the briskness of trade, and on either ground there be a danger of collision, then in that as a mere difference of opinion, or conflict of rival claims, the Government has no legal right to interfere.

#### ARBITRATION PROPOSED BY GOVERNMENT.

But here the question again arises whether such differences may not be amicably settled by mutual explanation through the intervention of a third party; or whether each party could not be induced to refer the whole question in dispute to the judgment of a disinterested and impartial board of arbitrators, whose decision should be accepted as final? If the possibility of such a method be admitted, could not the Government take the initiatory step in proposing a national board of arbitrators, or in suggesting the general principles on which such a board may be established? What higher function can the Government perform than to mediate between contending parties, and by securing satisfaction for each prevent the possibility of the disturbance of the public peace, or an interruption of the course of trade?

It is reasonable to assume that both employers and employed are accessible to reason—open to conviction—anxious to obtain only what is right. In numerous instances the benefits of arbitration have been realized; and so simple and honorable has the method proved that the parties engaged in the dispute have afterwards been amazed at their own stupidity in not resorting to the

plan sooner. The adoption of this expedient might have prevented altogether, or very materially have modified the recent troubles. What is needed is a rule, mutually acceptable, and applicable to all cases, by which any trade dispute shall be referred on certain clearly defined principles to arbitration. The Government cannot require this by proclamation; Congress cannot enforce this by the enactment of a new law. In either case there would be an infringement of liberty, and an unwarrantable interference with the mutual relations of masters and men. But both Government and Congress can recommend an arrangement; both Government and Congress can develop a plan by which it may be carried out; and both Government and Congress can take the initiatory steps for securing a general acquiescence. In doing this the Government will conserve its dignity and power, and will render a service to the nation and the age far more useful than the most brilliant victory upon the field of battle, and by which its name and influence will be indelibly impressed upon the hearts of the people.

#### FISCAL REGULATIONS: SPECIE PAYMENT: TARIFF REVISION, &c.

There are other matters, however, upon which the Government can take immediate and direct action; and some of which bear upon the laws which affect the general relations of trade and finance in the country. In this connection are to be noticed, *first*, the *resumption of specie payment*, according to the Act of Congress; *second*, the adoption of a *single monetary standard*, the formation

of that upon a gold basis, and the consequent rejection of any and every plan for the remonetization of silver ; and *third, a careful and liberal revision of the tariff*, so that the oppressive duties now imposed upon foreign commerce might be reduced, and the way gradually prepared for the opening up of reciprocal trade relations with Canada, and with foreign countries generally.

These are questions which involve the speedy and safe return of commercial prosperity. The Government cannot afford to trifle with them. Its consistency and honor, if not its very existence and power, are involved in them. In a subsequent treatise, or in a series of papers, it is proposed to discuss these questions in full, showing the basis on which they rest, the principles they involve, the effects which may be anticipated from their early settlement, and the means by which such settlement may be brought about. Among the working classes, and among politicians too, there is too much mystification on these matters ; and it does seem desirable to sweep away the cobwebs in which some very simple facts have become entangled, and to break down the fallacies by which certain writers and speakers are attempting to bolster up or revive an unsound, and, therefore, a dangerous financial policy. The writer proposes to attempt this, and thus to supplement the present appeal by a few other arguments and facts which the people need, and which may contribute something towards the settlement of these questions.

In the meantime the Government is under a weighty responsibility for the enforcement of the Resumption Act at the time specified, and for the preliminary steps towards a revision of the tariff. Both are needed ; for both the people look to the Government ; and from

both the happiest effects may be expected to spring. A degree of public confidence would be restored which has long been wanting in the business of the nation ; an incubus would be removed which has clogged the wheels and blocked up the highway of trade; and an elasticity and vigor would be infused into all departments of commerce which would quicken the national pulse, which would put into circulation millions of dollars of idle capital, and which would find employment for thousands of our now half-famished laborers and mechanics. With the adoption of such a policy bright and halcyon days would return ; and following in their train would be contentment, order, and joy,— a peaceful nation and happy homes. At the present moment almost every circumstance is favorable for the action of the Government in this direction. A super-abundant harvest is changing the whole commercial aspect of the nation, and is preparing the way for the long-desired and expected revival of trade. The heavens are bright with promise, the fields have been rich with fruit ; and the Government has only to read wisely the "signs of the times," and to act boldly in co-operation with Providence itself, to remove every ground of disquietude and complaint, and to secure for the country a measure of prosperity unequalled in its own history, and unsurpassed by that of any other nation.

#### NECESSITIES OF THE UNEMPLOYED.

In anticipation of this consummation, however, the Government has yet to consider whether it can adopt any effectual measures for the relief of the thousands throughout the country who are now destitute of em-

ployment, and in want of the ordinary provisions of life. The fact is indisputable that there are multitudes of such amongst us. It may be that the number is sometimes exaggerated. In the common estimate of 3,000,000 of unemployed persons their are probably included several thousands who do not fairly fall under that classification. Still, the fact is there that at any rate an immense mass of people have nothing to do ; and taken in the aggregate they form a prodigious power for evil. With their passions inflamed ; with the pangs of hunger driving them to madness ; and with a black, entralling despair, like a fiend, clasping them in its arms, they are becoming very threatening elements of society. Many of them have been industrious, respectable, virtuous, and they once little thought of ever being reduced to public charity.

But circumstances have a wonderful influence in vitiating principle, and in deteriorating character ; and let moralists and theologians theorize and dogmatise as much as they please about the obligation of virtue, and the duty of submission, and the reward of piety—and Heaven knows we have quite enough of sentimental nonsense and repulsive dogmatism in our pulpits and periodicals, whilst the real, hard, heart-rending facts of life are unnoticed or ignored.—there is, after all, a sting in poverty which will pierce the bravest soul, and there is a point of dependence and humiliation which will break down the severest restraints of law and reason. It is cruel mockery to preach contentment to a man when his family is starving, and when, though willing to perform any labor by which he can honestly earn a dollar, he is repulsed at every door. When will our preachers learn that the gospel of Christ is a gospel

of humanity,—of food and clothes, more than of hard inexorable conditions, whether of predestination or of repentance and faith? There is a present necessity which must be grappled with; future contingencies are uncertain. Whether right or wrong, people will allow the wants of the body to predominate over the claims of the soul; and such is the constitution of nature, and such are the habits of life, that by ministering to physical comfort the surest door is open for effecting spiritual good. ~~A~~savage is not insensible to a deed of kindness; the rockiest nature will melt beneath the plastic touch of sympathy; and to-day, unpromising as things sometimes look, let our politicians cease their intrigues, and our preachers their abstractions, and let them go as Jesus—that perfect model of humanity—did, into the homes and hearts of these thousands of unemployed, half-starved, half-ferocious men and women, and find them labor for their hands, and food for their bellies, and clothes for their backs, and make them feel that they are not deserted, though destitute, that there are human hearts which still beat responsively to theirs in all their inner woes; and the strong hand of prejudice, and resentment, and hostility will relax its grip, and floods of grateful tears will prove that deep down within the soul,—overgrown it may be by weeds and briars through long years of neglect,—there is a spring of the tenderest sensibility; and touching that as only a kindly word, or a gentle feeling, or a generous deed can do effectually, the foundation will be laid for a state of public order and peace which a million bristling bayonets will never bring about.

## CAN THE GOVERNMENT FIND EMPLOYMENT.

Can the Government devise any expedient for the employment of these people? It will not do to plead the want of power. The power exists; and the responsibility, too. No amount of sophistry and evasion will suffice to relieve the Government of its obligation to preserve the public peace, and, as necessary to that, to provide for the health and comfort of the people. It may prove a complicated question; but it is not incapable of solution. The danger has to be avoided, on the one hand, of encouraging pauperism and crime; on the other, of increasing public taxation and debt. And by the complex nature of our Government the question is reduced really into very simple proportions. It is whether by the Federal, State, and Municipal authorities combined, a system of public works may not be designed by which starvation may be kept away from thousands, and public tranquility be ensured? In its own province each authority is supreme; yet all may act in concert for a special end. And is there a nobler object in which they can thus unite than in that which requires the highest legislative wisdom, and the most generous impulses of the human heart?

In every State, if not in every city and town, improvements may be made, or works may be begun, which will contribute to its material adornment, or to its sanitary order, or to its social progress, and upon which, in so far as these objects are concerned, public money will be wisely expended. Could there be a more opportune period than the present for the performance of such

works? The reduced price at which building materials generally are sold, and the all but unlimited supply of labor-power, render possible the completion of such undertakings upon more reasonable terms than at any former period. In due time they will more than repay the money expended upon them, in the advancement of the public good, whilst in the immediate present they will help to avert a public danger, and to supply an urgent want. Could not the expenses thus incurred be provided for between the Federal, State, and Municipal Governments, upon a fairly graduated scale, or by an equitable principle of proportion? and is it not possible, even in these days of jobbery and fraud, so to arrange that the work shall be efficiently done, and the money honestly expended, according to the rules laid down, without reference to political proclivities, and without the enrichment of dishonest speculators?

#### NEW FIELDS OF LABOR OPENING UP.

But this at best could be only a temporary and limited expedient. It would not be wise to conceive of such a plan as a permanent and effectual remedy for all the misfortunes which prevail. Some other arrangement is obviously required which shall have the double advantage of dispersing the unemployed population, and of developing the resources of the country.

There is too great a tendency to crowd together in certain centres, and from that part of the present mischief springs. It is at best an unwise practice; and probably the most effectual counter-action that could be furnished to the practice is for the Government to provide facilities, and to present inducements for the peo-

ple to migrate to the West and the South, where the population is limited, where the climate is salubrious and healthy, and where the land will yield untold treasures as the reward of patient and persevering toil. What has been realized within the last few years in certain districts of the country both in agricultural produce and in mineral wealth is a fair index of the stores of unfathomed riches which are waiting to be explored, and of the brilliant fortunes which may yet be made.

It is possible that the extent of unoccupied prairie land in the West yet available or suitable for cultivation is not so great as we have generally supposed. In a recent article Mr. David Wells, an eminent authority on economic subjects, has boldly affirmed that the quantity of fertile public land suitable for farming purposes which can now be obtained by preemption, or at nominal prices, is comparatively limited, if not nearly exhausted. This opinion is apparently confirmed by the researches of Major Powell, who has charge of the Geological Survey of the Territories, and who, when reporting on the subject, says that there is not left unsold within the whole of the United States, except it be in Texas or the Indian Territory, land which a poor man could turn into a productive farm, of sufficient extent to make one average county in Wisconsin. There is something, at first sight, startling in these statements ; and possibly the evidence which Major Powell is about to furnish in the Report he is preparing for Congress may open up an entirely new phase of thought, and lead to a new line of action. Under any circumstances it is better that the actual facts should be known. We can legislate wisely if we know the ground on which we stand, and the direction in which our plans must turn.

But when all has been conceded that Mr. Wells and Major Powell require, it is still unquestionably true that there is a large portion of land unoccupied in the West, upon which fertile farms may be formed with comparatively small expense and labor. There are official reports to prove this; and supplemental to these are numerous communications which hold out an encouraging prospect to those who with willing hands and earnest hearts may turn their faces west-ward. But leaving the Western territory out of consideration, are there not numerous places in the South,—both east-ward and west-ward—which are at this moment awaiting cultivation and which present almost unexampled facilities for both manufacturing and agricultural operations? In Texas alone, not to mention any other State, since a reference as made to that by Major Powell, the climate and soil are simply superb, whilst the territory, as a recent writer has said, is greater in area than Kentucky, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, and all New England united. There are other places, too, rich beyond expression in the primary elements of wealth and power. Yet the immense advantages provided by nature in these Southern States are practically unenjoyed, simply because there are wanted the population, the enterprise, the skill, which are necessary to their full development. Were a few thousand dollars judiciously expended in some of these places, with steady, well directed labor, a wondrous transformation would quickly follow. Many who are now in penury would luxuriate in comfort; and the glowing picture of the old Hebrew prophet might be realized, when the wilderness shall become a fruitful field, and the desert shall blossom as the rose; when instead of the thorn

shall spring up the myrtle tree, and instead of the brier the fir tree ; and when from the very rocks shall flow springs of living water.

### CAN THE GOVERNMENT PROVIDE FACILITIES ?

Now is it not the province of the Government to facilitate the occupancy and cultivation of these lands ? Has it not power to render them acceptable to the public upon feasible terms, and to furnish in part the means which are necessary for removal thither, and for prosperous labor ? In doing this would it not contribute a powerful influence towards the equalization of our population, and towards the development of our natural resources, besides relieving our present apparently growing destitution ? And is not this an object vast enough, philanthropic enough, renumerative enough, to fill a patriot's soul, to nerve a statesman's courage ?

### PUBLIC CO-OPERATION ASSURED.

Such a proposition assumes, as a matter of course, the co-operation of the laboring classes themselves. Without that the best efforts of the Government must prove inoperative. No class of the community can be compelled to migrate to any particular spot. All idea of expatriation is groundless. There is no thought of a Siberian settlement. Those who go should go of their own volition, in unrestricted liberty, and with a resolute arm and will.

It is likely that tramps and vagrants will object. They are really not the persons for whom we write. The law must deal with them in another form. And possibly, too, some, even of the industriously inclined, with large families and no means, will hesitate to accept the proposal. The writer has met with such. Their difficulty, however, has mostly originated in a want of funds, and these supplied, a cheerful acquiescence has followed. And at this moment the writer knows of both individuals and families who are willing to avail themselves of such openings, and such help, and whose future will richly repay the efforts made on their behalf. There are strong reasons which bind many of them to their present habitation ; and genuine sentiment even in the poorest man must be respected as an instinct which bespeaks a spiritual relationship, and which shows that even poverty may be ennobled and enriched. But in such a crisis as this men cannot afford to indulge too strongly in sentimental feeling. They are confronted with a stern necessity ; they have to deal with a terrible want. Nothing short of starvation stares them in the face. If they remain in their present position it is without any visible prospect of improvement ; and life will become to them a miserable drag, and the world itself will prove little better than "a gulf of dark despair." If they remove to new fields, and enter upon a new life, they will, at least, have the promise of better times. Hope, like a star, will shoot its radiance across their path ; and after the privations of the desert, they may, like the Israelites of old, enter into the possession of a goodly land, which flows with milk and honey.

In general the laboring classes are signalized by common sense. Here there is need for its highest exercise. The subject appeals to their tenderest sensibilities, touches their deepest wants; and if in the consideration of it reason be allowed its proper place,—if it be viewed calmly, in the light of self-interest only, can there remain a doubt on which side the scale will turn, and what course will ultimately be adjudged the best? By general, if not unanimous consent, the unemployed portions of the community will determine that an exodus shall take place at once from these crowded centres to the attractive fields which are opening their arms to receive, and unfolding their beauties to allure them.

#### GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE HELP.

In the inauguration, or in the support of such a movement, the Government may cover itself with glory, and confer unspeakable advantage upon the country. But how can the Government help? is the question asked. With the most perfect consistency and ease, in rendering unoccupied lands more accessible and secure upon the simplest terms, in providing facilities for the transmigration of families, in furnishing funds upon advantageous terms to meet necessary expenses, in supplying implements and tools to perform the required labor, and in guaranteeing to the settlers all needful protection and help against harpers and swindlers, and under difficulty and danger. Is not the plan feasible? In the gravity of the crisis is it not worthy of dispassionate thought from the President and his Cabinet, from Senators and Representatives, from employers and employed?

Another element, however, is needed. It is not a movement that concerns the Government alone. In this there is ample room, in this there is urgent need, for the exercise of private benevolence. Next to the possession of the land, money will be required to set the thing in motion. It would be preposterous to propose to the unemployed the advisability of emigrating to these new fields, unless they are furnished with means and tools, and suitably directed when they reach their destination. They have not a cent in their pockets ; they have no articles which may be converted into money ; they would find it difficult to obtain the loan of a dollar, or credit for a plough ; and they want implements as well as funds. Without a supply of these things the hope of emigration is visionary ; with these it might soon become a practical reality.

This assertion is made upon the best authority. The writer has tested the sentiments and feelings of hundreds of workingmen ; and from intercourse with them he is warranted to affirm that multitudes would gladly avail themselves of the opportunity of entering upon this new life, if furnished with the means to do so. At this moment he has a list of persons who have expressed their willingness to go West or South, and to aid whom he is privately obtaining funds.

In providing such funds the people may gladly come to the aid of the Government. It is impracticable that the Government can do all. By Government interposition the work may be begun ; by private generosity the work must be carried on. There are thousands of individuals and families who even in these "hard times" have superfluous means, or who could without inconvenience lend a helping hand in promoting this emigra-

tion. They could give a contribution of money or furnish some needful tools ; and they could make some more direct effort to further practical arrangements. And why if a sacrifice of luxury or comfort be needed, should it not be made ? Why not do with less dress ; or with less amusement ; or with less gluttony, that the outcast and perishing may be sheltered, and clothed, and fed, and that the general order of society may be preserved ?

In this there is a direct appeal, not simply to the Government, not simply to the representatives of our public institutions, but also to employers of labor, and to private individuals and families of wealth and position. There never was a period when their influence could be so beneficially exerted for their country. It is a day of peril ; it is an hour of need ; and wise counsels, accompanied by generous help would tell immensely upon the present character and future destiny of our people.

Would it not be well for a few earnest, generous-hearted men and women to take the matter in hand, form themselves into a committee, collect information, propose plans, obtain funds, and commence work ? This would prove of infinitely more value than any amount of empty theorising or sentimental sorrow ; and in thus acting a crowd of fashionable people may encircle their own paths with glory, while they open up springs of joy in the hearts of thousands of their helpless fellows. Who will lead the van, or strike the first blow ? The answer must be prompt, bold, decisive ; and, alike because of their opportunities and their influence, the Mothers and Daughters of America are urged to come forward and aid in the inauguration of this much needed and useful work.

## INFORMATION NEEDED.

But whether this, or any other plan so far suggested, be deemed advisable, one other course is open to the Government and Congress; and that should be adopted with perfect unanimity, and without delay. Is it not felt and admitted that on many phases of this great question minute and accurate information is needed? Were it deemed expedient to attempt any legislation for the removal of our labor difficulties, are the real facts involved sufficiently patent to the public or sufficiently understood by the members of both Houses of Congress to enable them to form an impartial judgment, and to enact suitable and useful laws? From statistics which have been carefully collected, and from reports which have been incidentally furnished, a certain amount of knowledge is undoubtedly in the possession of the Government, and accessible to the public. But who will pretend that the actual condition of the various industries of the land, that the real relations of employers and employed, that the inner workings of our railway system, of our mines and of our public manufacturing bodies, and that, in one word, the public wants, on the one hand, and the public provision, on the other, are closely, comprehensively, accurately understood? And is not correct information the first requisite? Is it not possible to obtain the information thus desired? and is it not imperative upon the Government to adopt means for meeting the necessity?

## A COMMISSION PROPOSED.

As it appears to the writer this is not a formidable task. It requires no ponderous machinery, or elaborate

organization. In the hands of one intelligent, active, energetic, patriotic soul, the whole work could be accomplished at small expense, and in a short time. The Government or Congress may have need to enact a law, or to express a wish that the information desired should be given ; and there is not a corporation or trade in the country that would withhold it, if asked for it in the right way. It would then be for the agent of the Government to place himself in communication with the authorities and persons interested, to propose questions, to obtain returns, to receive suggestions ; and having succeeded in this to collate the documents possessed, to classify the facts elicited, to arrange the suggestions offered, and to prepare a well digested report based upon the whole, with a statement of such conditions as the premises would warrant.

In an incredibly short space of time the Government and Congress might be placed in possession of the latest, fullest, and most accurate information yet presented of the extent of our industrial population, of the relative number of employed and unemployed persons throughout the Union, of the capabilities and resources of our different trades, of the actual production which takes place in different manufacturing branches, of the amount of wages regularly paid to employees, of the losses and risks incurred by railway and other companies, of the organization and action of trade unions, of the savings, or sufferings of the working classes, and of a hundred other subjects which are essentially included, or which might incidentally arise.

In such a report the facility for opening up new land for cultivation would be considered ; and in the light of ascertained facts,—under the power of tangible evi-

dence, new views might be formed, and new methods be adopted, in reference to pauperism, vagrancy, and crime, which might both contribute to the reduction of public expense, and to the improvement of public morals. In a hundred ways, indeed, such a report might be made useful to the Government, to Congress, and to the whole country ; and for the labor it might involve, and the few hundred dollars it might cost, there should not be a moment's hesitancy in arranging for the performance of the work.

But should Government shrink from assuring this responsibility, why may it not be undertaken at the expense, and under the direction of some responsible body of private citizens, or representatives of charitable institutions? In the splendid achievements which have been made in geographical science by Mr. H. M. Stanley in Central Africa an illustration is furnished of what transcendent results may be attained through private enterprise, in a distant land, and amidst almost unparalleled difficulty and danger. Here is a subject which presents fewer difficulties, but which has more important bearings, the practical solution of which is of vastly more consequence to the health, and virtue, and prosperity, and happiness of the whole of this great country than the discovery of the source of the Congo, or the course of the Lualaba, and which yet might be brought to a practical and satisfactory issue by an expenditure of much less time, and labor, and money. If the Government fail, is there no one amongst us sufficiently interested to take it up, and by securing a report which shall remove ignorance, and lay a sound basis for operations, thus contribute towards the solution of this, the greatest problem of the age?

## CLOSING WORDS.

With profound deference and respect these views are submitted to all classes of the community. In thus introducing the subject the writer is influenced by an earnest desire for the preservation of public peace, and the promotion of the nation's good, upon a sound basis, and by the application of just laws. He is not vain enough to imagine that all the sentiments he has enunciated, or that all the arguments he has used, will pass unchallenged, or meet with unqualified approval. But of this he is conscious, that whatever exception might be taken to his views, or to his manner of stating them, he has approached the consideration of the subject with a mind free from party bias ; and has endeavoured to express the conclusions arrived at with a mingled feeling of courtesy and candor. There is no desire to dogmatize ; the writer will regret to be misunderstood ; and, still more, to excite an angry or party strife.

It is, however, impossible that the subject in any of its multifarious forms can be ignored. Both statesmen and philosophers must bend their minds to its discussion. In the pulpit and the pew ; in social intercourse and at public meetings, its principles must be analysed, and its lessons enforced. And if in the investigations which may ensue, there be a clashing of minds, or an abrasion of ideas, it is far more likely that truth will be eliminated in crystal forms, whilst nothing need be said to ruffle any temper, or to wound the weakest soul. As Plato said, long, long ago, "The evils of the world will continue until kings become philosophers, or philosophers king. In the higher forms of practical wisdom required by the great philosopher for administering the affairs of the Commonwealth, we

have all something to learn and unlearn ; and, perhaps, in nothing is this more manifest than in relation to the Labor Problem which is now forced upon the public mind. The right solution of that problem will influence in an incalculable degree the history of America, and the destiny of our race.

It may be given to this country, by an inscrutably wise Providence, to solve the social, as it has already worked out the political problem which had perplexed the ages of the past. In the fulfilment of that exalted mission the present Government and Congress are called upon to take a leading part ; and relying upon the hearty sympathy and zealous co-operation of the people, both should now fully apply themselves to the appointed task, resolved that in their hands the prestige of the country shall be preserved, whilst its comfort is enhanced. Whether rightly or wrongly, the writer is convinced that a solution of this grand problem is practicable ; and whether in any form he has contributed to that result the issue of this appeal can alone determine. The necessity for practical wisdom and disinterested sympathy was never stronger nor could philosophers, philanthropists, and statesmen have a better opportunity for acquiring renown and doing good.

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